



LOESS HILLS

The Loess Hills State Forest is named after the dominant geological formation of the area. The Loess Hills (pronounced LUSS) formation runs for 200 miles through 7 western Iowa counties (see map inset). The Loess Hills are wind blown soil deposits with depths over 200 feet. It took thousands of years for these depths to accumulate in great rolling drifts and for the water to carve the striking land formations, leaving a landscape that can be found only in a few other places in the world. The uniqueness of these hills and the mixture of native forest and prairie vegetation were the reasons Iowa has developed the beautiful Loess Hills State Forest.

MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE FOREST

The Loess Hills State Forest originated in 1986 with purchases from willing sellers by utilizing REAP funding. The DNR continues to pay property taxes for lands purchased with REAP funding.

The Iowa DNR takes pride in managing the diverse habitat in the Loess Hills by maintaining a healthy forest and prairie. The state forest now comprises 10,600 acres of the 20,000 acre goal. The four management units are:

Mondamin	1,065 acres
Pisgah	2,848 acres
Little Sioux	3,017 acres
Preparation Canyon	3,674 acres

One half million trees of native species have been planted and over one hundred acres of native ecotype prairie have been seeded. Annually over 1,000 acres of prairie and woodlands are burned for vegetation management. The burning allows the prairie to renew itself, resulting in a healthier ecosystem. Some land remains in crop production to aid wildlife. This land is rented to local farmers and annually 20-40% of the crop is retained over winter for wildlife food and cover.



The predominant plant communities on the state forest are both forests and prairies. Forests range from pure bur oak, to mixtures of oaks, hickories, basswood, elms, ashes, Kentucky coffee tree, black walnut, cottonwood, ironwood and red cedar. Prairies are a mix of short and tall grass species and include unique plants like tumblegrass, prairie moonwort, locoweed, coneflowers, yellow Indian paintbrush, pasque flower, yucca, and skeleton weed.

With the advance of forests and agriculture over time, the native prairie communities have declined and been confined to the narrow ridges and steep south facing exposures. Active management is now expanding the prairies.



RECREATION ON THE STATE FOREST

Most of the state forest is accessible by all-weather roads thereby making the area available to a variety of recreation activities. Hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, cross country skiing and driving for the scenic views are enjoyed by visitors. Come and experience the Loess Hills' magnificent vistas and unique ecosystems; its the only place like it in the western hemisphere. Use the map on the reverse side to navigate the areas.

The entire state forest is open to hunting, except for areas within 200 yards of residences. The Preparation Canyon Unit of the state forest has two picnic shelters and a lake with good fishing. The unit also has an elevated platform deck providing visitors with spectacular views of the forests, prairies and the Missouri River valley.

ROGER HILL

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Director, DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0034.



The Loess Hills State Forest is administered by the Bureau of Forestry, Division of Conservation and Recreation, Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

